



Privacy and Confidentiality

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is the Personal Health Information Protection Act?

The *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA) is Ontario's health-specific privacy legislation. PHIPA governs the manner in which personal health information may be collected, used and disclosed within the health sector.

2. What is personal health information?

Personal health information is any verbal, written or electronic information about you, your health or health care history. This includes:

- Your name
- Date of birth
- Address
- Phone number
- Tests, treatment and care information
- Personal/family information you or your family/substitute decision maker have told your doctor or other people involved in your care

3. What is my information used for?

HSN will use your personal health information for the delivery of patient care, administration of the healthcare system, research, teaching, statistics, fundraising, and to meet legal and regulatory requirements.

4. Who can access my information?

Only HSN healthcare workers involved in your care may access your information. HSN staff are only permitted to access patient information on a need to know basis in order to fulfill their duties as an employee of HSN.

5. Can my information be given to anyone else outside of HSN?

Yes. HSN is required to disclose patient information to other organizations such as but not limited to: the Ministry of Health, Public Health and The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). Information may also be shared with other physicians and healthcare professionals outside of HSN who are involved in your treatment and care. HSN has safeguards in place that are in accordance with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act*, when transmitting personal health information to other organizations.

6. Can I access my own health information?

HSN respects your right to access your personal health information within its' custody and control. You can ask to look at your record(s) or request copies of your personal health information. A fee may apply. You can make a request by completing the Request for Access to Personal Health Information form found on our Privacy & Confidentiality page.



7. Can I access the information of my family members?

No. HSN will only release personal health information to the patient it belongs to or the patient's substitute decision maker (SDM). If you are requesting access to your dependent child's personal health information and you are the custodial parent, the information may be released to you.

8. Can I ask that my personal health information not be shared?

You may request that HSN not share all or some of your information with certain people. For example: You can ask us not to share notes made by your social worker with your family physician. HSN will do our best to apply your consent restrictions.

9. What if I do not agree with something in my health record?

If you believe that your personal health information is incomplete or inaccurate you may request that HSN correct this information. You will need to submit a written request using the form found on our Privacy and Confidentiality page. HSN must respond to your request within 30 days of receiving it.

10. Will my family and friends be able to call the hospital and get information about me?

HSN will only disclose your personal health information to family and friends with your consent. Because we cannot properly verify a caller's identity, personal health information will not be provided this way.

As per PHIPA, HSN may disclose the following general information about a patient, as long as the patient has not objected:

- Whether or not the person is a patient at the hospital
- The patient's general health status (critical, stable)
- The patient's location in the hospital

11. How does HSN protect my information?

HSN has administrative, physician and technical safeguards in place to protect your information. You may contact the Privacy Office if you have a specific question about our safeguards.

12. What do I do if I feel that my privacy has been breached?

If you feel that your privacy rights under PHIPA have been violated you have the right to submit a complaint to HSN's Privacy Office. All complaints will be handled in a confidential manner. The Privacy Office will investigate your complaint and respond to you in an appropriate time frame. If you are not satisfied with the response from HSN you have the right to submit a complaint to the Information and Privacy Commissioner/Ontario (IPC).